Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Another record year for wine and grape industry

The 1999 season for the wine and grape industry saw another record year for Australia's grape growers, with 123,000 hectares of vines being cultivated. According to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today the total area of vines increased in every State, with South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria recording the highest increases.

For the first time red grape varieties overtook white grape varieties in the area covered. There was an additional 16,000 hectares of vines planted or grafted during the 1999 season.

All the main industry indicators, except imports of wine, reached new record levels in 1998-99.

Grapegrowers harvested a record 1.3 million tonnes of grapes in 1999 from a record bearing area of vines of 95,000 hectares. Of this harvest 85% went for winemaking, 9% went for drying and 6% for table or other purposes.

Crushing topped one million tonnes for the first time when winemakers crushed a record 1.1 million tonnes of grapes, which in turn produced a record 811 million litres of beverage wine.

Domestic sales of Australian-produced wine in 1998-99 reached a record at 348 million litres, up 3% on 1997-98. Exports rose 12% on 1998-99 to reach 216 million litres. Imports of wine cleared for home consumption fell 5% to 24 million litres.

Stocks of Australian produced wine held by winemakers rose to a new record of 1,090 million litres, an increase of 21% on 1997-98.

The concentration of winemaking in Australia remained constant in 1999. While 276 winemaking businesses crushed 50 or more tonnes of grapes in 1998-99, the largest 10 of these businesses crushed 68% of these grapes and produced 70% of beverage wine, the same proportions as last year.

The apparent per capita consumption of wine in Australia rose to 19.8 litres, still short of the record level of 21.6 litres in 1985-86. With imports of wine cleared for home consumption falling, apparent per capita consumption has been fuelled by increased consumption of Australian produced wine.

Strong growth in wine exports and a fall in imports cleared for home consumption led to a further widening of the trade surplus in wine. Australia exported 216 million litres of wine valued at $1,068 million. Australia imported 24 million litres of wine worth $103 million. The United Kingdom remained the main destination for Australian wine, followed by the United States of America and New Zealand.

Further details can be found in **Australian Wine and Grape Industry, 1999** (cat. no. 1329.0) available at ABS bookshops. A summary of the main findings can be found on this site. The ABS encourages media with online news services to link to these findings. If you require assistance to do this please phone us.

If you wish to purchase a copy of this publication telephone 02 6252 5249.

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